

## PEQUOT

## TRAILS

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY IN THE SPRING, SUMMER, FALL AND WINTER BY THE PEQUOT-SEPOS WILDLIFE SANCTUARY, INC., MYSTIC, CONNECTICUT

Volume VI

Spring of 1954

Number one

## Open House Scheduled For Sunday, May 16

All the facilities of the Sanctuary will be officially opened to the public on Sunday afternoon, May 16, with a special open house program from 2 until 5.

While the trails will be open for hiking and field trips prior to this date, the Trailside Museum will not open until then. Those of you who were brave enough to attend last year's opening at the beginning of May will recall the bitter weather we endured that day. We sincerely hope the two weeks' delay in our open house party will assure everyone of a very pleasant afternoon.

There will be ample time and opportunity for everyone to tour our trails, to visit the forestry demonstration area, to observe our new pond, and to study the exhibits in the Trailside Museum. New signs and labels telling nature's story in this area will make the tour around the Nature Trail an exciting experience. A visit to the forestry area will enable you to observe the woodland happenings described elsewhere in this bulletin in an article by our forester, Coert duBois.

## Field Trip Schedule

You will notice elsewhere in this issue under SCHEDULE OF EVENTS the dates and time of the various field trips scheduled for this spring. This is the only personal announcement you will receive of these events. Why not put the dates down right now and plan to be there? We'll be looking for you!

Remember to wear something that will keep your feet dry. Also, wear warm clothing, particularly for the Napatree Point trip. It's apt to be breezy on the Point. Bring your field glasses and bird guide.

## Visit Our Trading Post

The Sanctuary's Trading Post is now open with a new supply of bird houses and other items. This spring we are featuring a hollow log type of house that is attractive and natural in appearance. They will certainly be accepted readily by bluebirds, tree swallows, wrens, nuthatches, and other cavity nesting species.

You can still buy feeders, wild bird feed, suet cakes, and similar feeding supplies.

## Dr. Pettingill to Close Screen Tours April 6 in New London

Dr. Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr., Associate Professor of Zoology at Carleton College, Northfield, Minnesota, will present "In the Hills of Gold" in Buell Hall on April 6 at eight o'clock. This lecture and all-color motion picture will



bring to a close the Sanctuary's most successful screen tour season.

"In the Hills of Gold" is the pictur-

esque story of the "Black Hills." While the Black Hills are literally a treasure house—six thousand square miles containing among other things, gold, silver, and copper—this area is sort of an island of green growing life—plant life and animal life—surrounded by an ocean of semi-arid desert wastes extending seemingly endlessly in all directions.

The climate and fertility of the Black Hills region are such as to support varied fauna and flora. Here, near the famous towns of Deadwood and Lead, former stamping grounds of "Wild Bill Hickock, Deadwood Dick, Poker Ace, and Calamity Jane," Dr. Pettingill has made a rich and colorful film of a rich and colorful area.

Dr. Pettingill is a nationally known ornithologist, writer, and wildlife photographer. His recent book "A Guide to Bird Watching" is rapidly becoming the "Duncan Hines" of American naturalists. Many of his films were used in making the successful Walt Disney movie "Nature's Half Acre." Dr. Pettingill has just returned from the Falkland Islands where he has been busy making another film for Walt Disney.

## Bird Watching Course to Be Given in Mystic

The Sanctuary's course, **Introduction to Bird Watching**, will be given in Mystic this spring under the direction of our Curator, Thomas P. McElroy, Jr. While the course is planned primarily for beginning birders, it promises fun and excitement for all who attend. It will include such items as the fun of bird watching, games, attracting birds, tricks of identification, bird songs, slides and motion pictures.

The course will be given on three consecutive Wednesday evenings, April 14, 21, and 28, at the Mystic Community Center. One or two field trips will also

be included in the course. The dates for these will be determined by those taking the course. The evening sessions will start at 7:30 and end at 9:00.

The course is open to all adults whether they are members of the Sanctuary or not. A registration fee of \$2.00 will be charged to cover the cost of slides and film rentals. Those desiring to attend the course should fill out the form below (or a similar one) and mail to the Sanctuary. Registration fees may be paid at the first session.

\* \* \*

Please enroll me for the course, Introduction to Bird Watching, to be held at the Mystic Community Center on Wednesday evenings, April 14, 21, and 28.

Name .....

Address .....

☐ Registration fee is enclosed.

☐ Will be paid at first session.



## Our Forestry Area After Four Years

By Coert duBois

On October 29, 1949, some fifteen men cut thirty-three trees on about three-quarters of an acre that had been marked by foresters for an improvement cutting in our Sanctuary woods. As you stood on the trail at the top of the rise at the entrance of the tract on that day, the impression was of a ragged, unhealthy stand of mixed hardwood second growth—white oak, red oak, black oak, hickory, sassafras, red maple and black birch—badly top-broken by recent hurricanes and several windfalls. What is the condition of the area now four growing seasons after the cutting?

I went over the tract carefully on March 7, 1954. From the same point as you enter, looking through the trees and down over the flat, I got the feeling of a healthy and vigorous young forest with clean boles growing strongly and pushing against their bark like young boys getting too tight for their breeches. When you look up you can see the leaf canopy is going to be complete with no holes in it.

Down at the foot of the hill, and on the moist flat to the right of the trail, we took out a group of red maples (Nos. 8, 9, 11, 12 and 13) to favor another group of lusty young white oaks. This certainly was successful for the last (outer) three rings on the best looking of these white oaks measure better than a half an inch. The cut maple stumps have sprouted strongly—No. 11 averaging 12 feet high, No. 12, 10 feet and No. 13, 8 feet.

At the eastern end of the flat, still to the right of the trail, there was a group of sassafras of which we took out two (Nos. 14 and 15). These have sprouted very strongly, the largest sprout of the group being 2½ inches in diameter at the stump and 15 feet high. Pretty good for a four year old baby. You can tell now that in another five years we will have a very clean, straight stand of tie-size white and black oaks on this flat with a fairly complete underwood of 3 to 6 inch maple and sassafras sprouts—good charcoal size.

### Cut Areas Growing in Again

On the lower slope on the north side of the trail where Nos. 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24 came out we released a group of tie-size black oaks. Four years ago it looked like quite a hole, but today all the crowns of the trees left are touching. The black birch didn't sprout at all which is a good thing because they were all diseased.

On the other hand the maple is coming in strongly on this slope, one stump (No. 31) having 15 healthy sprouts averaging 12 feet high. The reproduction on this slope will come in pretty thick and will be mostly maple sprouts

with some black birch, hornbeam and chestnut seedlings.

I was disappointed in the scarcity of oak sprouts—white or black. I am afraid the maples will have beaten the oaks to it. Anyway dry maple will burn and our next crop will be ties and firewood.

On the whole it is obvious that our cutting has greatly improved this patch of woods. It looks healthy and clean and the brush piles have rotted down completely. On your next visit to the Sanctuary, why not visit this area and see for yourself!

## This Land Is Yours

You are part owner of a beautiful piece of land in the upper Colorado River Basin in the states of Utah and Colorado. This piece of land is known as the Dinosaur National Monument. It is a part of our National Park system.

This land you own, along with all other American citizens, is a unique and primitive paradise, unequalled anywhere in the world, for it is here we find the beautiful rainbow canyons of the Yampa and Green Rivers. Here we find Echo Park with Steamboat Rock, one of the natural wonders of the world. This is the land that is now being needlessly threatened for the possible benefit of a comparative few.

### Bills in Committee

There are three identical bills now in the hands of the House of Representatives Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs that would authorize the construction of a series of dams that would destroy for all time to come this beauty preserved by the foresight of a few for the benefit of all. These bills are known by number as H.R. 4443, H.R. 4449, and H.R. 4463. The dams are proposed for the purpose of supplying a more constant flow of water and increased power output for the demands of local areas. If this were an urgent need, and flooding Echo Park was the only way of fulfilling this need, it might then be worth some consideration. However, the need is still questionable and it has been proven that virtually the same water flow and power supply can be obtained without destruction of the National Monument.

General U. S. Grant, III, an expert engineer, has demonstrated that 6% more storage capacity can be obtained at alternate sites at a saving of \$54,000,000 to the U. S. taxpayer.

This is a matter in which every American has a tangible interest. May we urge you to protect this interest by making your wishes known to The Honorable A. L. Miller, Chairman, House of Representatives Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, House Office Building, Washington 25, D. C.

**A Statement of Purpose:** We want this publication to be of the utmost service to you—to keep you informed concerning activities at the Sanctuary and in your community; to invite your participation in these activities; and to provide you with general articles of education and inspiration regarding conservation subjects. Won't you drop us a line and tell us what you would like to see published? We would appreciate it.

## Curator Busy With Community Programs

There has been a decided increase in our community programs during the past month. Mr. McElroy has been quite busy providing programs for schools, youth groups, service clubs, and other adult organizations.

Special nature or conservation programs have been provided for the following groups during the past month: Ledyard Grange, Nature Club at Westerly Library, Stonington Community Center, Ledyard School, Groton Kiwanis Club, New London Girl Scout Leaders Association, and the North Stonington Grange. Other groups are scheduled for future dates.

A special monthly nature program has been started in cooperation with Frank Turek at the Stonington Community Center and with Frank Dearborn at the Mystic Community Center. The first of these programs was held at the Stonington Community Center on February 24 with more programs to follow during the months of March, April, and May.

## Did You Know That . . .

—There is no poisonous water snake in the northeast. Our only two poisonous snakes are the copperhead and the rattler.

—The peaceful porcupine backs into battle, lashing its tail and driving the loosely-attached barbed quills into the face or body of its attacker.

—A Sunday newspaper in New York consumes 80 acres of timber for a single issue.

—In the past thirty years we have lost more good soil than in the whole of previous history.

—Social insects have most complex reactions to temperature and humidity. The harvester ants in California and other western states collect and store seeds in their underground homes. They carefully remove the chaff and nip off a part of the embryo plant to prevent germination. The seeds are then placed in the granaries of the nest. When it rains the seeds get wet. To prevent rotting, or perhaps germination of some few seeds, the ants carefully bring them to the surface on the first sunny day and the seeds again dry out. When dried they are replaced.

—When the little bog plant called sundew catches an insect on its sticky hairs, its leaf enfolds the captive and glandular hairs excrete a secretion whose digestive fluids dissolve the soft part of the insect's body. This carnivorous habit is not due to lack of nitrogen



in bogs since other plants grow there that are not insectivorous and the meat eating sundews and pitcher plants get much food from photosynthesis too.

—The sugar maple groves of Vermont were originally part of the maple, beech, hemlock forest association. But the landowners first removed the hemlock for tanbark, then the beech for implements, until the sugar maple alone remained. Thus man writes his history on the landscape. Our solid oak stands may also reflect past land use patterns. They may be partly due to former grazing when cattle, preferring other, better tasting sprout growth, killed everything but the oak. Oak also will grow on poorer soil than most other timber trees.

—When millions of buffalo roamed the plains, rodents counteracted the soil compacting effect of buffalo trampling. They gave the soil a complete plowing every twenty years.

—Overgrazing encourages late young growth which comes at just the right time to feed grasshoppers. The Swainson's hawk of the west eats grasshoppers, but these invaluable birds have been foolishly persecuted.

—Tansy, the pretty roadside escape with the yellow buttonlike flowers, was used in early times as an ingredient of cider brandy, which was then called called gin.

ADELE ERISMAN

## Briefly Noted

The Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut are offering a number of scholarships to the Conservation Workshop at the University of Connecticut. Any adults interested in taking this course can get complete details from Mr. McElroy at the Sanctuary. The dates are July 5 to 17.

The artificial feeding around our new pond attracts a large flock of ducks daily. It is hoped that the wood ducks will find one of the three nesting boxes put up for their use. Some planting will be done this spring to provide more natural food and increased cover.

There were 750 people in attendance at our last Screen Tour to hear Roger Tory Peterson. This has been our largest audience to date. We continue to grow.

Mrs. Robert L. Capwell of Waterford is the latest member of our special book club. Her five-dollar donation will buy a new book for our library. Your donation will help, too.

Mr. Lyle Thorpe has been appointed Superintendent of the State Board of Fisheries and Game for Connecticut. He succeeds Dr. Russell P. Hunter.

We will present the Screen Tours again next season. The time and place will

be announced at the earliest possible date.

Still another format! We are not yet satisfied that we are doing the best with our limited budget. We will keep trying until results prove more acceptable to everyone.

## Bird Notes

The generally open winter along this section of the sea coast probably accounts in part for the comparatively few reports of "unusual" species observed at local feeding stations. Although our winter visitors were not quite so spectacular in numbers and variety, there were numerous reports of interest.

A pair of **Cardinals** have been feeding all winter at the feeding station of Mrs. Lester Dunklee, in Mystic. A single female **Cardinal** was reported by Adele Erisman of North Stonington during the brief periods of zero weather. This extreme cold also brought numerous **Fox Sparrows** to many feeding trays. Most of them disappeared once the weather moderated. Mrs. Erisman has also had an **Oregon Junco** and several **Carolina Wrens** as constant winter visitors.

### Quaker Hill and Quiambaug Report

An albino **Blue Jay** has been visiting the feeding stations in Quaker Hill. Ward Hubbard, located on the Quiambaug Cove, reported a **Phoebe** late in December. His neighbor, Mr. Fellows, had a **Canada Jay** feeding for a couple of days. Reports of individual **Mockingbirds** have come from Noank and West-erly. A **Snowy Owl** is spending the winter at Napatree Point and has been reported by several parties taking this interesting winter hike. Mrs. Robert Anderson of Noank had a lone **Dickcissel** and a brief visit from the only **Evening Grosbeaks** reported this winter. Perhaps the most unusual visitor was observed by Mrs. Robert Burnett of Mystic—a **Mink** sitting in her glass window feeder just outside her kitchen window.

Four **Towhees** and a **Catbird** spent the winter at the Sanctuary. Large flocks of **Robins** were here during both zero cold waves feeding on our abundant supply of multiflora rose haws. A **Yellow-Breasted Chat** was a December visitor but hasn't been noticed since then. Several flocks of **Pine Siskins** were observed in the Sanctuary but they didn't take possession of the feeders as they did last winter. The **Red-Winged Blackbirds** arrived as per schedule on Washington's Birthday. Two **Great Blue Herons** also made their first appearance on that date. Every morning finds a flock of 30 or 40 ducks visiting the feeding areas around our new pond. The largest majority are **Black Ducks**, some **Mallards**, and at least one pair of **Wood Ducks**.

## Early Spring Observations At the Sanctuary

### Monday, March 22

The day dawned fairly warm but with a dense fog. The first flock of **Geese** observed this spring passed over the Sanctuary about 9:00 a.m. They were flying low according to their honking but they couldn't be seen because of the fog. They were traveling fast with a strong SW tail wind.

### Wednesday, March 24

This was the first real warm day of spring. I saw my first **Phoebe** and first **Tree Swallow** of the season. I flushed a flock of **Mourning Doves** that were feeding around the pond and a **Woodcock** from the alders in the meadow. **Honey Bees** were observed carrying their first pollen of the spring. A pair of **Wood Ducks**, a **Great Blue Heron**, and a **Muskrat** were observed in the pond. **Spring Peepers** were in fine chorus.

### Thursday, March 25

The weather turned quite cloudy and scool during the night. A dead **Rabbit** was found on the barn roof in the morning. The Denison House sign was also stained with blood—signs that an owl had found its prey nearby during the night.

### Friday, March 26

About ten o'clock at night I heard the **Barred Owl's** "Who Cooks for You?"

### Saturday, March 27

**Phoebes** and **Tree Swallows** were back in large numbers. **Song Sparrows** and **Purple Finches** kept up a constant chorus during the day. **Robins** were singing their spring song. Flushed the **Wood Ducks** from beneath the nesting box.

### Monday, March 29

Second flock of **Geese** went over late  
T. P. McElroy

## Small Watersheds Bill Passed by House

H. R. 6788, the Hope-Aiken bill to provide federal assistance to local soil districts and watershed associations in a program of upstream conversation and flood prevention, was passed by voice vote in the House March 11, 1954. Some minor amendments were adopted to perfect and strengthen the bill; one would require approval of proposed watershed projects by the House and Senate agriculture committees. The bill now goes to the Senate, where similar S. 2549 is pending in the Committee on Agriculture and Forestry.

Of our 560 members only 29 have not renewed for the year ending June 30, 1954.



## President's Report

A very interested and active Board of Trustees, plus help from many other members, has made this one of the most alive years of your Sanctuary. After six years on this Board, it is your President's opinion that never before has there been more cooperation, more time given by individual trustees, all busy people in their own right, to promoting and activating the work of your organization.

Mr. Reid Johnson and Dr. Harold Schuster, serving as Vice-Presidents, have proved very strong support, Mr. Louis Darmstadt, a faithful Secretary and Mr. Ralph Wadleigh, an able Treasurer of our ever precarious finances.

Due to efforts of Mr. Robert Chap-pell, Mr. Belton Copp, and others, attendance at the Screen Tours has been far greater this year than in the past. Greatly increased expenses of the lectures will prevent any profit being shown but your Board feels quite victorious in having been able to meet this year's heavy costs.

### Finance Committee Busy

The Finance Committee is ever busy under the chairmanship of Mrs. Henry Whitney. The Membership and Special Gifts divisions are both working constantly at this time.

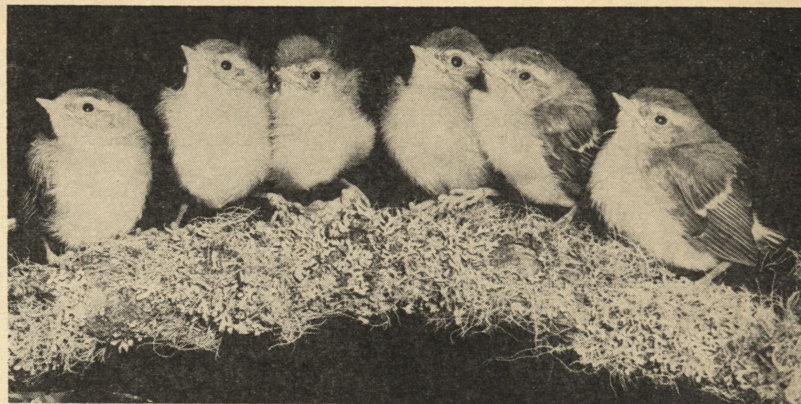
Mrs. George Burgess and Mrs. Hartford Gongaware head the Membership Committee and have been doing a splendid job. A meeting at the Marine Historical Museum in February brought out the following town chairmen, each of whom will form a sub-committee to work on the annual drive:

Deep River	Mrs. Lewis J. Smith
Chester	Mrs. Whitney S. Porter
Niantic	Mrs. Ralph Putnam
Lyme	Mrs. George McCurdy
New London	Mrs. Richard Lathrop
	Mrs. Maynard Peterson
	Mrs. A. A. Lubchansky
Groton	Mrs. Carleton B. Morse
Noank	Mrs. Frank J. Kohl
Mystic	Mrs. David Kellem
	Mrs. Henry Scheel
Stonington	Mrs. Cottrell Chandler
	Mrs. Jacques Wimpfheimer
Westerly	Mrs. Frank Sullivan
Norwich	Miss Emily Wilcox
	Mrs. Bernice Manken
Storrs, Conn.	Mrs. Winifred Passemore

The Special Gifts Committee, headed by Mr. Donald Cottrell and Mr. Reid Johnson, also includes Mr. Robert Chap-pell, Mr. Max Cottrell, Mrs. Whitney and Mr. Wadleigh. Theirs is the most difficult undertaking.

Reported previously was your new edifice, the wonderful gift of C. B. Cottrell & Sons, arranged for and secured by Dr. Schuster. While not quite large enough for holding meetings, its ample size and hidden retreat have prompted the Trustees to allow it to serve in its

## Second Smallest Members of Bird World



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

**POSING FOR A FAMILY PORTRAIT:** Kinglets (these are young golden-crowned) are the second smallest members of the bird world—only humming-birds being smaller. Yet despite their tiny size they are among the first of the songbirds to make their way northward, braving the bitter storms of early spring. Audubon Screen Tours, which are entertaining and educational programs on animals, birds, and the out-of-doors—in lively, dramatic motion pictures—are being presented this season in 200 cities in the United States and Canada.

own capacity as a co-educational feature for the time being.

### Landscaping Plans Drawn Up

On the grounds, plans for planting and landscaping the pond have been drawn up by Mr. Coert duBois. He reports the wood lot area in good shape, needing only new signs. He has been assisted in his work by Mr. George Burgess.

Mr. McElroy, your modest Curator, has kept busy on his Educational Program and is regularly giving talks to young and adult groups including nature courses. He is working hard on the Museum at this time, readying new exhibits for the summer. He is also hoping to have the trails revised in order that they may be worked into one ecological story. Coming events for the spring include the bird identification courses, several field trips, one special event for fund raising, the poster contest, the Museum opening in May and the year's-end annual meeting in July.

### Plans and Problems

All of this activity and the many unnamed good people working for your Sanctuary add up to a most successful-sounding year. However, this report should not be closed without mentioning the ever increasing difficulty in raising funds to keep this good work going. All of the program activities, the educational plans and the grounds' improvements are poor compromises of what should and could be done, were more funds available. It seems very doubtful at this point if even the amount of the budget will be realized. Membership dues can never be expected to support your organization. All of its services are given free of charge to the public with the exception of the Screen Tours. They, too, were embarked on as a public service and at best break even, many years going in the red. With no endowment, it is a constant

and serious problem to make ends meet. Increased costs for everything this year make it even more difficult. In the past, special gifts have been the answer, but these are not so readily available this year. In an organization like this, they will always be necessary but other means must be found to supplement them. Suggestions from the membership as to how this problem could be met would be most welcome.

The whole conception of your Sanctuary with its conservation and educational programs seems much too worthwhile to be abandoned. Surely, among the better than 500 members, there should be both ideas and funds available for this work. This is your retiring president's report and appeal.

MRS. RICHARD P. GROVER

## Schedule of Events

- April 6—Screen Tour. Olin Sewall Pettingill presents "In the Hills of Gold." Buell Hall, 8:00 p.m.
- April 14, 21, and 28—Introduction to Bird Watching Course, Mystic Community Center, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.
- May 2—Field trip to Napatree Point. Leave Watch Hill Beach Club at 8:00 a.m.
- May 9—Field trip at the Sanctuary. Group will leave Trailside Museum at 7:00 a.m. Return at 8:30 a.m. for coffee and doughnuts.
- May 16—Open house at the Sanctuary, 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. Trailside Museum officially opens. Refreshments.
- June 13—Wild flower field trip at the Sanctuary, 2:30 p.m. Mr. Russell Waldo of Norwich will lead this trip.